

ROBERT EDWARD LEE

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HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

Robert Edward Lee

By Barbara Ross M'Intosh

IN a spacious, pleasant house in the north of Scotland hangs a treasured photograph of Robert E. Lee, the Confederate General, and his staff. The faded grey uniforms of the men cannot dim the glory of their military achievements, which moved the whole world to boundless admiration, and the very essence and savour of romance are embodied in their gallant leader. As I spoke with the owners of the house, I found my talk flowing back and ever back to the great General. They told me of how their mother had lived in battle-scarred Virginia, right through the hardships and hazards of the Civil War. From her home she would steal out at nightfall to minister to the wounded of North and South alike, while the General himself made his headquarters with the family until he and his dauntless army had perforce to retreat before Grant and his overwhelming numbers. These were brave high-hearted days, and as we talked of them, I seemed to see the mists of time roll back, and the courtly subject of our converse step forth to give us gracious greeting. I should be happy, indeed, if I could make him live for you, as he has done ever since for me.

Robert Edward Lee was born at Stratford, Westmoreland County, Virginia. All the good fairies were passing generous to this third son of an honoured family—grace of figure, beauty of feature, and charm of manner came to him in their season, and were accompanied by a picturesque setting of wealth and established tradition which displayed them to the best advantage. His father had served his country well under Washington's leadership, and his comrades' name for him of "Light-horse Harry" was a symbol of his noted courage and daring.

It was not surprising that the young Robert early regarded a soldier's life as his ultimate destiny. To this end he attended the military academy when his elementary schooling was over. At West Point, where so many of the future Generals of the Civil War received their training, he continued to win approval on every side, while the favour of his teachers did not in any sense lessen his popularity with his companions. He was so courteous and kindly, so entirely free from boastfulness or brag, that all his comrades liked and trusted him.

The death of his father, when he was only eleven, deprived Robert of a good comrade and wise counsellor, while it left his invalid mother dependent on him for care and consideration. The loving devotion with which he discharged his trust is proved by the ideal relationship which existed between mother and son; and when she also turned her face westward, and went to join her husband, her last smile and loving look were for her ardent boy, who had not been too busy to brighten her days by countless little kindnesses. Years drifted on, and a gay peal of wedding bells rang out for the attractive young soldier and his winsome bride. Her name was Mary Custis, and, many years before, her great-grandmother, then a gentle widow, won the heart and hand of the great Washington. In the Lees' home of Arlington there were many beautiful and costly relics of Martha Custis and George Washington.

The urge of war called Robert Lee forth from his home after some years of quiet and happy domesticity. America embarked on a long conflict with Mexico, and many a gay young spirit rallied to the flutter of the Union flag and dreamed of honour and arms in the coming campaign. Writing many years later, General Grant had some strong things to say of this costly war, which he considered to be a none too righteous undertaking. Certain it was that many a young soldier received his first practical training for the sterner struggle of Civil War which was to come. Prominent among these was Robert Lee, and in his capacity of aide-de-camp to General Scott he had many a thrilling adventure with My Lady Danger, and many a narrow escape. All through this time of hazard and hardship, he wrote constantly to his anxious wife, who kept the home fires burning and the little family circle safe and well tended. Each child was lovingly remembered by the absent father in these intimate home letters, and one has only to read them to realize how much the family ties meant to this man of camps and battlefields.

When he came home, covered with laurels, Robert Lee found it no easy matter to recognize his youngest son and namesake, who had grown surprisingly during his absence.

It is tempting to linger over the ensuing

Toddles Runs Away

By Isabel Bond

"I AM going to run away," snapped Toddles, the fat pug, to Toby, the brown pom.

"Indeed! I am surprised," Toby replied. "I thought you had a jolly fine home, and were a special pet dog."

"So I had. So I was—once," growled Toddles; "but now I'm put aside for a cat—a silly kitten that can't do anything but play and mew, and lap milk all day."

"How is that? Tell me all about it," said Toby sympathetically. He and Toddles lived next door to each other, and always told each other everything.

"Well, it—this kitten—has only been at our house a few days. It's a reddish-yellow colour—an ugly creature I call it, but mistress says it is a beautiful cat, and she calls it 'Tawny,' and makes the most stupid fuss of it. As you know, I always had the best of everything to eat—delicate fish, tender pieces of meat, and lots of rich cream, with my own thick, soft cushion in front of the fire. Now, if you can believe it, the kitten has the fish and cream, and the other day it curled itself up on my cushion and wouldn't move when I snapped and pushed it."

"Oh, that isn't fair! What did your mistress say?" asked Toby, much interested.

"She encourages it. That's the worst of it," answered Toddles indignantly. "When I tried to turn it off my cushion, she said, 'Don't be selfish, Toddles. Let dear little Tawny lie there for a while. You can lie beside him on the rug'—and I had to."

"Well, I shouldn't have liked that," admitted Toby, "though our cat, Tabby, is quite all right, and we both lie on the rug together. We're great pals."

"That may be, but this Tawny is different. He wasn't wanted at our house at all, and now he is there, he cuts me out of everything. Only this morning mistress gave him a saucer of my cream, and all she said was, 'I'm sure my kind doggie won't mind this little kitty sharing his cream. Toddles can eat meat and biscuits, and this little kitten is only a baby, and can't.' I'd have liked to snap his silly little wispy tail off, only I dared not. So you can see why I'm going to run away. It will show them I can find another home, where I'll be more important than a cat."

"Have you another home ready for you then?" asked Toby.

"Not yet, but I'll soon find one," Toddle replied confidently.

So that very evening, when he found the front door open for a moment, Toddles ran away. He ran up and down several streets looking inside butchers' shops and quite enjoying his newly found freedom. Then he began to feel tired of dodging policemen and vehicles. It was time he found a new home, so he ran into a house behind a boy who opened the street door, but just as he reached the end of the passage, a voice cried, "Turn that fat pug out, Sid; it will be fighting the cat."

Here was one chance gone, and all for cat!

He trotted along to the next street, where he saw a big open gate leading into a yard where straw was lying about. What a fine bed it would make! He was creeping into the straw when a man shouted:

"Get out, Fatty. We don't want any pugs here. They eat too much." So poor Toddles stole out again to search for a home. But he couldn't find one. Nobody wanted him, and he was very hungry. His own home—even with that horrid cat—seemed perfect now. Suddenly he decided to go home. Perhaps mistress would forgive and take him back. And an hour later mistress did. "It was naughty and silly of you to run away, Toddles," she said. "I believe you were jealous of Tawny. You must learn that there is room in our home and hearts for both of you."



July

(*Rhymes of an Amateur Gardener*)

S TAKE and tie, stake and tie,
S That's the motto for sweet July—

Tie and stake, tie and stake,
Then straighten the soil with a hoe or a rake.
On the porch, all the creepers are growing apace;
The clematis thinks he is running a race.
I must fly for the raffia and join in the chase,

And tie—tie—tie!

Tie and stake, tie and stake,
That's the motto we gardeners take—
Stake and tie, stake and tie,
If you loose a moment, your chance slips by.
The herbaceous plants by the southern wall
Must be given support ere they grow too tall.
If you wait too long, they will certainly fall,
So, stake, stake, stake!

L. A. L.

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